

We Believe:

6. It is God's desire to free us from evil, be empowered by God and mature us in His likeness (image):

- We are born dominated by evil, destruction and sin (Ephesians 1:1-3). We are driven and defined by selfishness, and we are separated from the only source of hope we have-Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ came to save us from our sin (Matthew 1:21). The grace of God, through Jesus Christ, is the only power to overcome the evil that dominates us (Romans 5:20-21). Through the power and benefits of Jesus Christ we are born again (John 3:3), made a new person (2 Corinthians 5:17), forgiven (1 John 1:9) and reconciled to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Jesus Christ's first call was for us to "repent" and enter His kingdom (Matthew 3:17). Repentance (metanoia) is a God-given sorrow for the evil we have lived, and results from interacting with the love and mercy of God (Romans 2:4). It is a transformation of mind and heart toward God, His Word and His people. The final result of this experience is a wiping away of sin, and times of refreshing in the presence of God (Acts 3:19). I think we could all use a little refreshing!
- When Christ comes into our lives, in the person of His Holy Spirit, we are justified through faith (Romans 5:1). The word justified is the same word as righteousness (dikaios), and means that God not only saves us and gives us eternal life, He also places His rightness on our minds and hearts (lives). Here is where we begin the process of what we call sanctification, where God sets us apart from this world for Himself.
- The first aspect of sanctification is actually a death to the selfishness that has driven us to this point (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:4-5). When we die to self in Christ we are united with Christ in His resurrection. This results in walking in the newness of life and a freedom from sin (Romans 6: 4-7).
- (Not that we are ever absolutely rid of sin, since in Romans 7:14-23, Paul teaches that the body of sin will vociferously attack us all our lives. Sin is not expiated, however, we are separated from this body of sin and death (Romans 7:24-25). For we who have chosen to be in Christ there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- As a result of the grace of God, we have the ability to cleanse ourselves (katharteros) of all defilement, inwardly and outwardly, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. God desires to give us a whole new vision of the mature disciples we can be in Him (2 Corinthians 7:1).
- It is God's will to personally set us apart (hagios-sanctify us entirely), keeping us without blame until He comes for us. He is faithful to call us and He will bring it to reality (1 Thessalonians 5:24-25).
- We are called to be perfect (teleos) as He is perfect (mature, holy adult) (Matthew 5:48). The contextual vision of this call is found in Matthew 5:43 where we are called to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. It is imperative that we see the depth and impossibility of this call without His grace.